

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1 1. A computer-implemented method for providing access to functions of a portable  
2 information appliance, comprising:

3 while the portable information appliance is operating in a configuration mode,  
4 converting input signals from a microphone to a first data set representing a voice of an  
5 authorized user and storing the first data set in the portable information appliance; and  
6 while the portable information appliance is operating in a standby mode,  
7 converting input signals from the microphone to a second data set representing sound  
8 detected at the microphone, and if the first data set matches the second data set, providing  
9 access to functions of the portable information appliance. (col. 8, lines 15-45)

1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 automatically placing the portable information appliance into an operations mode  
3 if the first data set matches the second data set; and

4 while the portable information appliance is operating in the operations mode,  
5 converting input signals from the microphone to a third data set representing sound  
6 detected at the microphone and storing the third data set for subsequent playback.

1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:  
2 comparing the third data set to each of a plurality of recorder-command data sets,  
3 wherein each of the recorder-command data sets is associated with a sound recorder  
4 function performed by the portable information appliance; and  
5 performing the sound recorder function associated with a recorder-command data  
6 set that matches the third data set.

1 4. The method of claim 2, further comprising automatically returning the portable  
2 information appliance to the standby mode after a selected period of inactivity.

1 5. The method of claim 2, further comprising returning the portable information  
2 appliance to the standby mode in response to a user input signal.

1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising  
 2 while the portable information appliance is operating in the configuration mode,  
 3 converting input signals from a microphone to a plurality of first data sets representing  
 4 voices of a plurality of authorized users and storing the plurality of first data sets in the  
 5 portable information appliance; and  
 6 if any of the plurality of first data sets matches the second data set, providing  
 7 access to functions of the portable information appliance. ✓

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising automatically placing the portable  
 2 information appliance in the standby mode when power is initially applied to the ✓  
 3 appliance.

1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
 2 entering a program-button mode in response to a selected user input signal while  
 3 the portable information appliance is operating in the operations mode;  
 4 associating a user-specified set of functions with a user-selected programmable  
 5 button while the portable information appliance is operating in the program-button mode;  
 6 and  
 7 performing the set of user-specified functions associated with a programmable  
 8 button in response to a user selection of the programmable button while the portable  
 9 information appliance is operating in the operations mode.

1 9. The method of claim 4, further comprising automatically placing the appliance in a  
 2 power saving mode after a second selected period of inactivity.  
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1 10. A system for providing access to functions of a portable information appliance, the  
 2 system comprising:  
 3 means for converting input signals from a microphone to a first data set  
 4 representing a voice of an authorized user and storing the first data set in the portable  
 5 information appliance, while the portable information appliance is operating in a  
 6 configuration mode; and

7 means for converting input signals from the microphone to a second data set  
8 representing sound detected at the microphone and, if the first data set matches the second  
9 data set, means for accessing the functions of the portable information appliance, while the  
10 portable information appliance is operating in a standby mode. ✓

1 11. A computer-implemented method for providing access to functions of a portable  
2 information appliance, comprising:

3 while the portable information appliance is operating in a configuration mode,  
4 converting input signals from a biometric module to a first data set representing a  
5 biometric characteristic of an authorized user and storing the first data set in the portable  
6 information appliance; and

7 while the portable information appliance is operating in a standby mode,  
8 converting input signals from the biometric module to a second data set representing the  
9 biometric characteristic detected at the biometric module, and if the first data set matches  
10 the second data set, providing access to functions of the portable information appliance. ✓

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1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the biometric module includes a fingerprint  
2 sensing pad adapted to convert the input signals into a data set representing the biometric  
3 characteristic of the authorized user.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the biometric module includes a retinal scanning  
2 device adapted to convert the input signals into a data set representing the biometric  
3 characteristic of the authorized user.

1 14. The method of claim 11, wherein the biometric module includes a microphone and  
2 a digital signal processor that interface with a memory arrangement to recognize a voice of  
3 the user. ✓

1 15. A system for providing access to functions of a portable information appliance,  
2 comprising:  
3 means for converting input signals from a biometric module to a first data set  
4 representing a biometric characteristic of an authorized user and storing the first data set in

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5 the portable information appliance, while the portable information appliance is operating  
6 in a configuration mode; and

7 means for converting input signals from the biometric module to a second data set  
8 representing the biometric characteristic detected at the biometric module, and if the first  
9 data set matches the second data set, means for accessing the functions of the portable  
10 information appliance, while the portable information appliance is operating in a standby  
11 mode. ✓